

REMARKS

Claims 3-4, 10-24 are pending in the application, of which claims 3-4 and 10-18 have been withdrawn from consideration and claims 19-24 are newly-added. Claims 1 and 5-9 have been canceled. Claim 2 was canceled in an earlier response.

Newly-added claims 19-24 cover the elected species III shown in FIGS. 9-11, where claim 19 includes limitations from originally elected claims 1, 7 and 9, and claims 21-24 include the limitations of original claims 5-6.

In the Office Action mailed November 14, 2008, the Examiner objected to the drawings because the description failed to mention "position (1)" appearing in FIG. 11.

Accordingly, pg. 21, line 24 of the substitute specification has been amended to refer to "position (1)."

U.S. Patent 6,772,568 to Thiers et al. (hereafter "Theirs et al.") was applied in a 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claim 8 (now canceled) in the outstanding Office Action.

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Theirs et al. discloses a coupling device of the hard panel in the floor covering.

Therefore, the hard panel is formed of rigid material, not of elastic material as in the present invention. Theirs et al. cannot achieve the high sealing performance of the present invention even if the curved portions compress the angular portions.

Applicant respectfully submits that the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is inapplicable to the newly-added claims of the instant application and should be withdrawn.

Newly-added claims 19-24 are now in condition for further examination.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 04-1105.

Dated: March 13, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosed: Request for Continued Examination (RCE)
One Month Petition for Extension of Time